

IMMIGRATION OF ALIENS INTO THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 31, 1916.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. BURNETT, from the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, submitted the following

R E P O R T .

[To accompany H. R. 10384.]

The Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 10384) to regulate the immigration of aliens to and the residence of aliens in the United States, reports the same to the House, and recommends that the bill be passed.

The bill reported is in part a codification of present immigration laws. However, a number of important amendments have been made to the existing law.

The first important amendment is on page 2, line 14, an increase of the head tax from \$4 to \$8. But it will be noted that the law is so changed that children under 16 years of age accompanying their father or their mother are exempted entirely from head tax. Under the present law every alien, even the babe in the arms of its mother, is required to pay a head tax of \$4. This, the committee thought, was rather a harsh provision, and therefore exempted children mentioned in the bill.

The next important provision is on page 3, line 12. Under the present law aliens who enter the United States after an uninterrupted residence of at least one year immediately preceding such entrance, in the Dominion of Canada, Newfoundland, the Republic of Cuba, or the Republic of Mexico, are exempted entirely from head tax even if they should intend to remain permanently. This bill removes this exemption and puts all countries on a plane of equality in that respect. However, the committee realized that the exceptional conditions along the Canadian and Mexican borders required exceptional treatment. Across the boundary from California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas there are a number of small cities and towns. Across the Canadian border there are a number of important cities and villages. In normal times many of the residents of these Canadian and Mexican cities and towns visit the United States on business or pleasure from time to time.

They usually return to their homes after a temporary stay, and the committee did not think it wise to interrupt this intercourse, and has therefore undertaken to permit it as usual, and without the payment of head tax. The Commissioner General of Immigration, with the approval of the Secretary of Labor, is given the power to issue rules and regulations and prescribe the conditions necessary to prevent the abuse of these exemptions. The Commissioner General believes that it will be a simple matter to establish rules and regulations that will avoid irritation and at the same time accommodate the real residents of neighboring countries, while forbidding the entry of aliens through Canadian and Mexican ports under conditions more favorable than those found at such ports as Boston, New York, or New Orleans.

To the excluded classes we have added persons of constitutional psychopathic inferiority. This term is unfamiliar to laymen and to some physicians not engaged in the special field of the alienist. With alienists, however, it has a well-defined meaning. One has defined it to be "a congenital defect in the emotional or volitional fields of mental activity which results in inability to make proper adjustment to the environments." During the last several years the number of aliens insane entering New York institutions for the insane has greatly increased, until it costs the State more than \$3,000,000 annually to take care of its alien insane.

The following statements will be illuminating on this question:

On page 9, report of New York State Board of Alienists for the year ended September 30, 1911, is the following:

It must be remembered that foreign countries look with favor upon the emigration to America of diseased and defective persons. Examination by American officials at the ports of embarkation in Europe has been strenuously opposed by certain foreign Governments, and it is a notorious fact, commented upon in every annual report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, that the steamship companies make only the most perfunctory medical examination of passengers upon their departure for America. Thus there are no obstacles in the way of diseased persons embarking for this country. In the case of those returning, however, the conditions are reversed. The passengers are carefully scrutinized by ships' surgeons at the gangway as they embark at the port of New York, and those who do not satisfy the steamship officials or the representatives of foreign Governments stationed on such ships are peremptorily refused passage, even although they have been only a short time away from the countries to which they owe their allegiance. Cases are not decided individually upon their merits, but as soon as it is learned that an applicant for passage has been in an institution for the insane he is at once rejected. It can be seen that with an unimpeded flow of inferior immigrants to this country, and with an outflow which is so carefully regulated that only the prosperous and sound can return, we must ultimately become the asylum for an increasing number of those unable to sustain themselves.

On page 22 of the same report is the following:

For the first few years after the commencement of that remarkable migration of the races of southern and eastern Europe to this country (to which Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia have contributed nearly 500,000 persons a year) it is noted that the increase of patients of those nationalities in the State hospitals was gradual. By 1905, however, it was possible to predict that when the effects of the "new immigration" commenced to be felt the "old immigration" (of Germans, Irish, and Scandinavians) would be outdone in the numbers of insane added to the foreign-born population of our State hospitals. To-day that prediction is fulfilled, and during the year more than 55 per cent of the aliens deported by the United States Immigration Service were natives of those three countries.

The New York Times of March 28, 1912, says:

INSANE ALIENS.

The Times is informed by Secretary McGarr, of the State commission in lunacy, that of the 31,432 insane patients under treatment in the 14 State hospitals on February 10 last, 13,163, or 41.9 per cent, were aliens. Foreign-born patients have increased since the February census of December 31, 1903, by 1,532, or 13.4 per cent. In the two State hospitals for the criminal insane there were 1,230 patients on February 10, of whom nearly 44.4 per cent were of alien birth; the Federal census of 1910 showed a percentage of aliens to total population in this State of 29.9 per cent.

The prevalence of insanity among immigrants is evidently much greater than among the native born. Of the 5,700 patients admitted to the civil hospitals for the year ending September 30, 1911, 2,737, or 48 per cent, were aliens, and 1,481, or 26 per cent, were of alien parentage, while only 1,224, less than 26 per cent, were of native stock. Of the whole number, the nativity of but 218, which is 3.8 per cent, was not ascertainable. Insanity among the foreign peoples of this city occurs in a still larger percentage of cases. Of the first admissions to the hospitals, 2,006 out of 3,221 residents of the city were of foreign birth; that is 64.1 per cent, although the foreign-born population is but 40.4 per cent of the whole.

In view of these conditions physicians and alienists have urged the inclusion of the class above referred to in this bill among those to be debarred.

This section also adds vagrants and those who are afflicted with tuberculosis in any form.

Also those who advocate or teach the unlawful destruction of property or are affiliated with or are members of organizations that do so. This, however, is modified by the introduction of the proviso on page 9:

That nothing in this act shall exclude, if otherwise admissible, persons convicted or who admit the commission or who teach or advocate the commission of an offense purely political.

To the clause in said section defining contract laborers we add the words "whether such offers or promises are true or false," so as to reach those who have been induced to migrate by persons who desire to exploit them.

The present law makes aliens deportable who have within one year from date of application for admission been deported because they had been induced or solicited to migrate to the United States. We so amend the law as to make all aliens deportable who have been deported under any provision of this act and again seek admission within one year from the date of such deportation, unless prior to reembarkation the Secretary of Labor shall have consented to their reapplying for admission.

This section also adds stowaways to the excluded classes, with the provision that they may be admitted within the discretion of the Secretary of Labor.

Hindus, by name, are added to the excluded classes by this section. So are those who can not become eligible to become naturalized citizens of the United States, unless otherwise provided for by agreements as to passports, or by treaties, or conventions now existing or that may hereafter be made. In section 3 an illiteracy test for the admission of aliens is made. It is as follows:

That after three months from the approval of this act, in addition to the aliens who are by law now excluded from admission into the United States, the following persons shall also be excluded from admission thereto, to wit:

All aliens over 16 years of age, physically capable of reading, who can not read the English language, or some other language or dialect, including

Hebrew or Yiddish: *Provided*, That any admissible alien or any alien heretofore or hereafter legally admitted, or any citizen of the United States, may bring in or send for his father or grandfather over 55 years of age, his wife, his mother, his grandmother, or his unmarried or widowed daughter, if otherwise admissible, whether such relative can read or not; and such relative shall be permitted to enter. That for the purpose of ascertaining whether aliens can read the immigrant inspectors shall be furnished with slips, of uniform size, prepared under the direction of the Secretary of Labor, each containing not less than 30 nor more than 40 words in ordinary use, printed in plainly legible type in some one of the various languages and dialects of immigrants. Each alien may designate the particular language or dialect in which he desires the examination to be made, and shall be required to read the words printed on the slip in such language or dialect.

This proposition to subject aliens applying for admission to the United States to the reading test has been before Congress several times.

A bill containing a similar provision was vetoed by President Cleveland on March 2, 1897, and was promptly passed over his veto by the House, and would have been so passed by the Senate but for the fact that it reached that body right at the time of the expiration of that Congress and was crowded out by other important measures.

The bill reported by this committee is much more liberal than the one vetoed by President Cleveland. Besides that was 19 years ago, and at that time the active immigration to this country was only 230,832, while for 1914 it was 251,612 from South Italy alone.

The small immigration from southern and eastern Europe had not then even begun to effect economic conditions.

In February, 1913, it passed both Houses by an overwhelming vote, and was vetoed by President Taft. It passed the Senate over the veto by a vote of 4 to 1, and was only lost in the House by a few votes.

During the Sixty-third Congress it passed the House by a vote of 2 to 1, and in the Senate by a vote of 7 or 8 to 1, and only failed by a few votes of passage over President Wilson's veto.

It has come up in almost every Congress for the past 15 or 20 years, and Mr. Gompers says in a letter which he wrote the chairman of this committee on January 29, 1915:

If ever the citizenship of the United States has given indorsement to any measure of legislation, it certainly has done so to the principles embodied in this bill.

The great labor and farmer organizations of the country, both North and South, and many of the large patriotic organizations have for years, by action of their national and local conventions, indorsed this text and petitioned Congress to enact it into law. The legislatures of Ohio, Virginia, Tennessee, Vermont, and of many other States passed resolutions and petitioned Congress to pass it. Within the last week the Women's Republican Club of the City of New York has, by resolution, asked Congress to pass it. The people of the whole country understand it, and the great majority of them indorse it.

Even during these times of war in Europe 446,474 aliens came in. It is true that nearly as many went out, most of them in response to the call to the colors on the other side. But not only will most of the survivors of those who departed return, but it is thought by many of the ablest men of the land that millions more of the poorest

and most illiterate will come to this country. The best will stay to rehabilitate their stricken countries, and the worst will flock to our land and beat down the price of labor, and erect the lowest standard of living which decent men can conceive.

The recent strike at Youngstown, Ohio, is an illustration of the conditions brought about by this kind of labor even in these good times. I quote the following from a recent statement made by the Committee on Industrial Relations:

A Government investigation published in 1910 showed that 70.8 per cent of the steel workers at Youngstown were of foreign birth. In 330 families * * * the heads of families earned an average of \$440 a year. Forty per cent of these heads of families earned less than \$400 per year; and 14 per cent earned less than \$200 per year. * * * During all these years the men lived in squalid, crowded rooms. Overcrowding and poor diet aided the rapid spread of trachoma, a disease always associated with dire poverty.

Is it right that American laborers and their families should be forced to live amid such revolting environments and such debasing conditions? Yet that is the result of pouring in the millions of illiterates from Europe to beat down the price of the toil of the man who earns his bread by the sweat of his face. The illiteracy test is restrictive as well as selective and in normal times will keep out more than 200,000 of just such as brought about those conditions at Youngstown. In 1907 Congress created a commission to investigate the immigration question and to report its conditions. This commission, after nearly four years of investigation and study, both in this country and in Europe, made its report to Congress. There were nine members of this commission, and they were unanimous in making the following statement:

The investigations of the commission show an oversupply of unskilled labor in basic industries to an extent which indicates an oversupply of unskilled labor in the industries of the country as a whole, and therefore demand legislation which will at the present time restrict the further admission of such unskilled labor. * * *

As far as possible the aliens excluded should be those who, by reason of their personal qualities, would least readily be assimilated or would make the least desirable citizens.

They then say:

The commission as a whole recommends restriction as demanded by economic, moral, and social considerations, furnishes in its report reasons for such restrictions, and points out methods by which Congress can attain the desired result if its judgment coincides with that of the commission.

Eight out of the nine, after citing various methods of restriction, concurred in the following report:

A majority of the commission favor the reading and writing test as the most feasible single method of restricting undesirable immigration.

It is certainly interesting, and we believe important, to know some of the reasons which led the commission up to these conclusions, and we will make a few extracts from the "Brief statement of conclusions and recommendations of the commission." On page 25 of this statement they say:

The proportion of the more serious crimes of homicide, blackmail, and robbery, as well as the least serious offenses, is greater among the foreign-born. The disproportion in this regard is due principally to the prevalence of homicides and other crimes of personal violence among Italians and to the violation of city ordinances previously mentioned.

On pages 29 and 30 they say:

It is certain that southern and eastern European immigrants have almost completely monopolized unskilled labor activities in many of the more important industries. This phase of the industrial situation was made the most important and exhaustive feature of the commission's investigation, and the results show that while the competition of these immigrants has had little, if any, effect on the highly skilled trades, nevertheless, through lack of industrial progress and by reason of large and constant reenforcement from abroad, it has kept conditions in the semiskilled and unskilled occupations from advancing.

Several elements peculiar to the new immigrants contributed to this result. They came from countries where low economic conditions prevailed and where conditions of labor were bad. They were content to accept wages and conditions which the native American and immigrants of the older class had come to regard as unsatisfactory. They were not, as a rule, engaged at lower wages than had been paid to the older workmen for the same class of labor, but their presence in constantly increasing numbers prevented progress among the older wage-earning class, and as a result that class of employees was gradually replaced. An instance of this displacement is shown in the experience in the bituminous coal mines of western Pennsylvania. This section of the bituminous field was the one first entered by the new immigrants, and the displacement of the old workers was soon under way. Some of them entered other occupations and many of them migrated to the coal fields of the Middle West. Later these fields were also invaded by the new immigrants, and large numbers of the old workers again migrated to the mines of the Southwest, where they still predominate. The effect of the new immigration is clearly shown in the western Pennsylvania fields, where the average wage of the bituminous coal worker is 42 cents a day below the average wage in the Middle West and Southwest. Incidentally, hours of labor are longer and general working conditions poorer in the Pennsylvania mines than elsewhere. Another characteristic of the new immigrants contributed to the situation in Pennsylvania. This was the impossibility of successfully organizing them into labor unions. Several attempts at organization were made, but the constant influx of immigrants to whom prevailing conditions seemed unusually favorable contributed to the failure to organize. A similar situation has prevailed in other great industries.

Eight of the nine members of the commission, as stated above, recommended the illiteracy test as the most feasible method of keeping out this very kind of immigration.

The committee believes that those who are fleeing from religious persecution should find, as they always have found, a city of refuge on our shores. Hence the following provision excepting immigrants of that class from the illiteracy test where they are otherwise admissible:

All aliens who shall prove to the satisfaction of the proper immigration officer or to the Secretary of Labor that they are seeking admission to the United States to avoid religious persecution in the country of their last permanent residence, whether such persecution be evidenced by overt acts or by laws or governmental regulations that discriminate against the alien or the race to which he belongs because of his religious faith.

Another important change in the present law is an increase in the fines and penalties imposed on steamship and other transportation companies that bring in inadmissible aliens. The last report of the Bureau of Immigration shows that notwithstanding the great reduction in the number of immigrant arrivals on account of the war in Europe, 24,111 immigrants were debarred during the year ending June 30, 1915. This can be accounted for mainly by attributing it to the gross lawlessness of steamship and other transportation lines whose freight of human souls being reduced by the war in Europe were determined to make it up by increasing the number of inadmissibles carried by them. This can only be prevented by making these lawbreakers feel the heavy hand of the law which they have violated.

The present law does not require the transportation companies to refund to the alien his cost of transportation coming over. This is remedied by making the amount of the transportation over a part of the penalty on the company bringing him in, and said amount is to be refunded to the immigrant.

Another important amendment is that excluding deserting alien seamen. Some of these work their way over with the steamship companies with the intention of deserting, and in that way evading the present law, which does not exclude them. This practice is taken care of by sections 31, 32, 33, and 34 of this bill.

There are many other important changes of existing law in the bill reported by the committee, but most of them are of an administrative character and will not be here specifically referred to.

The committee has labored earnestly in its efforts to keep out the most undesirable of those coming to our shores and at the same time encourage the immigration of those who come to make their homes with us, to promote the moral and material prosperity of our country, and to become permanent citizens of our great Government.



